231 We did not see dogs hunting, but there
that we saw around the homes looked extraordinarily mangy and ill-found and acted as if they could be of no possible use. Some are merely kept as pets and the children play with them but the adults generally ignore them completely. [171] None of them are watchdogs or show any courage or assertiveness. It was said that the Maquiritares raise exceptionally good hunting dogs, and that these are sometimes acquired by trading, but we saw none of this favored breed.[117] [192] The curious fact that the Kamarakotos use the Spanish word for "dog" (which they pronounce peró, not perro), although there is a widespread Carib name for them, suggests that the Kamarakotos may not have had dogs until recently, although other Carib tribes apparently have had them a long time, probably since pre-Columbian times. In any case, dogs play a very minor role among the Kamarakotos and are far less abundant and useful than among many allied Indians.

411 Most of the Guayana and Amazon Indians seem formerly to have used
[74] wooden clubs, often elaborately carved and decorated and of characteristic
[114] form for each tribe (see Schomburgk, Koch-Grünberg, Roth, and, indeed, almost any detailed account of travels in this general region). Used mainly for warfare, now an obsolescent occupation, these clubs seem almost everywhere to be dropping out of use. The Kamarakotos undoubtedly formerly used these, but I saw none among them, and could obtain no evidence that they are now made or used, even, as among many tribes, as ceremonial or dance accessories.

Fishing.

226 Fish is a favorite food of the Indians and fishing is a favorite sport and,
[262] in the case of fish poisoning, social event. Fishing rights are well defined and
[123] jealously guarded — the only serious Indian war that the Kamarakotos remember
[72] arose from infringement of these rights and such infringement is still, in theory
[685] at least, a capital offense.

Fish are taken with bow and arrow, hook and line, hand net, trap, and poison. Fish spears and casting or set nets appear to be unknown. The principal fishing arrow, waibakasi, has already been described. The trident fishing arrow of some allied tribes was not seen, and this method of catching fish is not now much used by the Kamarakotos, especially as large fish are now rare. In fish-poisoning some of the fish that are stunned but not dead are shot with arrows, usually mere sharpened sticks, but this is more a sport for the boys (and more sportive men) than a serious method of obtaining the fish.

227 All the Indians of the Guianas and Venezuela and most of those of Brazil
[172] by now have steel hooks of foreign manufacture, a favorite article of trade that
[439] penetrated the region farther and faster than explorers have. They have a native name, kunoi[y] in Kamarakoto, and doubtless have displaced native wooden hooks although these are now quite unknown to the Kamarakotos who consider

117 [see footnote on p. 320, category 116 - Analysis]

462 women do rather more than half of the heavy carrying, but I have already noted that the men are really ready to assist if needed, and the men do considerable work, such as the very laborious basketwork, that might, a priori, be believed to be woman's work.

[171] The general pattern of this division of labor is typically Carib, but the details vary much from tribe to tribe. For instance planting, here done by the man, is commonly woman's work elsewhere and hammocks, here made by women, are often made by men elsewhere.

Legal Concepts

Property.

421 The Indians are not capitalists in that they have no permanent title to real property, no personal command of the means of production, no accumulated or hereditary wealth, and no property right in the labor of others. At the same time they have a very real and lively sense of personal property and in other ways also their society is decidedly not communistic. In general what an individual makes or uses is his. When he ceases to use it, it reverts to the public domain.

● 423 Thus it could be said that the land, in general, belongs to the tribe in common, or that it belongs to no one, but when a man clears a conuco or builds a house on a portion of land, that land is his. No one has the right to use it (or even to enter it against his wishes) as long as he is in occupation, and its products are exclusively his, free of any obligation to share or divide them. When he leaves it, however, he cannot transfer title to it. It reverts to commons and any comer can occupy it or enjoy its fruits and use. The same is true of structures erected on the land.

592 Such property may be said to belong to the household group or to the
423 to›-esa? as its leader and representative. Another very important special case
226 of such ownership is that of fishing rights. According to custom, which of course is the equivalent of uncodified law, a household established on or near a stream owns the fishing rights on that stream from its dwelling downstream as far as the next habitation. These rights are very rigidly maintained. Even a fish killed upstream is lost to the killer if it floats below the next household before being gathered. Of course several or many households do commonly unite in poisoning a given stretch of water and all share in the results, but this is only by invitation of the household owning the right to that water. Violation [685] [221] of these rights is among the most serious offenses known to the Indians, as is suggested by the fact that the last bloody war, of which they retain vivid but [224] confused memories, is said to have arisen from such a violation. There seems, on the other hand, to be no proprietorship of hunting rights.

423 648 The lack of formal title to their land under the Venezuelan legal system presents, for the moment, no special problem as regards land used for dwelling, farming, hunting, and fishing. There is no pressure on such land and at present no tendency by non-Kamarakotos to compete for it, although a colonization scheme such as has been suggested might suddenly present the Indians with a very serious and perhaps, for them, insoluble problem. They are, however, already aware of possible difficulty as regards title to the gold deposits in their territory, even though the gold so far discovered has not been sufficient to cause a serious invasion of their remote region. Their reasoned attitude regarding this is to establish title to the gold deposits for the cacique. In their consideration he is not, however, a personal owner but only a custodian on behalf of the whole group, just as household property can be considered as belonging, in a rather vague but real sense, to the head of the household but is freely used by all its members. There is a rather close analogy to the crown lands of a constitutional monarchy, where title is said to belong to the king but he is in fact an owner only as he represents the state as a whole and the property is actually communal.

316 423 643 [648]

This communal nature of the mines that "belong" to the cacique is shown in practice by the fact that any adult male member of the tribe has the right of working the mines and that the gold found by any man becomes his personal property without any deduction of royalty, rental, or tribute. Even further than this, if a particularly rich pocket is discovered it is customary to notify the other members of the tribe so that anyone who wishes to can share in it.

422 425 Movable possessions are more rigidly owned than is land and in this case the ownership is usually to be considered as purely personal and not as communal even in the sense that household lands belong to the family group rather than specifically to the to?-esa? as an individual. Here the principles of ownership arising from manufacture, as between different households, and from use, as within a household, are dominant. Thus a new hammock made by a woman of a given household is the property of that household and its barter to another group may be by the maker or by the to?-esa? as representing the household, but if it is assigned to and used by a particular member of the household, it is his, or her, personal property. So, too, in barter or purchase of goods from other tribes or from Venezuelans, this may be done on a purely personal basis or by the to?-esa? for his household and subsequent personal ownership is established by the individual who uses the object or material in question.

[437] [437] [439]

[126] In our trading with the Indians, it was noteworthy, for instance, that a basket made, of course, by a man but already in use by a woman, was not sold except with the woman's consent and that the price was generally payable to her or for her benefit. On the other hand, a new basket was sold by and for the maker. In paying for labor, the women generally spent the sums due them on themselves and on the young children, not for their husbands. Commonly a man would trade his labor for goods for his family rather than for himself.

461 465 [593]